



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

there are said to have been 52,415 independent Indians; 14,000 subjugated Indians of unmixed race; and 155,000 subjugated Indians, of blood more or less mixed.

II.—*Précis de Géographie élémentaire.* Par Paul le Chaix, Membre de la Société Royale de Géographie de Londres, et de la Société de Physique de Genève, Ouvrage adapté au Collège de Genève. Genève, 1843.

Elémens de Géographie Générale; ou description abrégée de la terre d'après ses divisions politiques coordonnées avec ses grandes divisions naturelles, selon les dernières transactions et les découvertes les plus récentes. Par Adrien Balbi. Paris, 1843.

THE perusal of these two works—both by able geographers—one, indeed, by a Nestor of geography, the worthy successor of Malte Brun—among other good effects is adapted to set the reader to ask himself—What is geography?

There are branches of science the object of which is so precisely defined, that it is at once seen whether a question or investigation belongs to it or not. Of this class are geometry, which restricts itself to the measurement and comparison of magnitudes; chemistry, which confines itself to the analysis of the constituent atoms or elements of bodies; and so on. But geography, statistics, and such other branches of science as have had their forms and limits originally impressed upon, not from the unity of their subject and its completeness within itself, but from the wants of practical men, who require information respecting a certain number of cognate topics, run into each other (if the expression be allowable), so that it is sometimes difficult to say to which of them a subject belongs.

With respect to geography, for example, it is much more easy to say what it is not, than what it is. It is not geology, and it is not geognosy, though the geographer is required to be pretty familiar with the results at least of these sciences, and results can never be correctly apprehended without a general notion of the processes of thought and observation by which they are attained. In like manner, it is not meteorology, the study of the laws of motion, as illustrated in the oceanic tides and currents; nor botany, though of all of these sciences the geographer requires to have correct notions. Still less is geography the study of antiquities or statistics, although the world—and the world as a fit habitation for man—being the great object of the geographer's inquiry, he cannot avoid casting a look at the facts of the latter; and it is often by combinations of the former, and inferences drawn from these combinations, that he must arrive at the knowledge of facts which lie within his proper domain.

For the geographer of mature years this difficulty of defining the exact boundaries of geographical science is of comparatively little practical importance. The best and most intelligent geographers are continually overstepping their own limits—running off into irrelevant disquisitions—carefully cataloguing facts which only serve to obscure the main object of their inquiries; but their own judgment, and the criticisms of their collaborateurs, always brings them back. These discursive habits—this tendency to overload their subject—is a propensity not always to be discouraged. It is at least indicative of an energy and richness of thought that is more to be desired than that barrenness of mind which, from sheer want of the ability to strike out original trains of investigation, never deviates from the path.

It is in elementary works that the want of precise notions respecting the scope and tendency of geography is most hurtful. No school or college tuition—no teaching of any kind—can make a man of science. The utmost teachers can do is to put their pupils on the road, which they must travel by their own exertions. The acquisition of science is the work of a life, and it must be acquired by self-exertion, or not at all. The business of the teacher is to impress upon the learner's mind the nature and aim of the particular branch of science to which he is introduced, and to supply him with some of the most approved useful methods for pursuing his investigation. The first of these objects can be best attained by presenting to the pupil a sketch of the results of the science in its actual state of advancement. Definitions are of little use to tyros except to bewilder them, or flatter them with an illusive notion that they have learned something. They are empty forms, strengthening to those intellects into which the substance of knowledge has already been conveyed, but dry husks to those who have not already acquired a fund of experience to fill them up with.

Let the teacher lay hold on the imagination of his pupil, by rapidly placing before him the forms and features of the earth in its different regions—as he himself believes they appear. Let him next direct his attention to the circumstance of how small a portion of the earth any one individual can know from personal observation. This will naturally lead to the inquiry how this limited personal experience is to be eked out by information from others; and to the importance of that acquaintance with the laws of evidence that teach to discriminate true from false or inaccurate information. In the process of communicating this information opportunity may be taken to impress, by illustration, the importance of neatness and precision of expression, and to show the value of technical language—of fixed and unvarying names to designate the most frequently recurring forms of earth and ocean—

when not pedantically used. The proper names of regions, districts, and localities, will be most easily retained in the memory after some explanation has been given of their origin and meaning. And this, it would seem, is the fittest time to direct attention to the advantage which a general notion of the structure and combination of states, in order to appreciate the influence of political relations in leading certain portions of the earth to be regarded as its integral units. The value of geography as a key to history, and the light which history again reflects on geography, might here be explained; as well as the necessity of paying attention to the changes produced on the earth's surface by human agency, in order to distinguish between what is natural in the appearance of a district, and what the result of the operations of art—the only means of escaping error in endeavouring to ascertain the original characteristic forms of the earth's surface. Such a method of tuition would have the double recommendation of being at once the most easy and attractive; of impressing ineffaceably on the pupil's recollection the distinction between the essentials of geographical knowledge and those subordinate inquiries into which the geographer is required to enter extensively, though only the results of his investigations ought to be entered into the register of his science.

This is no Utopian or fanciful sketch: it is almost a literal transcript of what has been done by one who has given a greater impetus perhaps to geographical science than any other person in an age distinguished by the great amount of intelligence, energy, and enterprise, that has been devoted to this pursuit. Those who make their estimate of how much Professor Ritter has done to promote geographical science from his published works vastly underrate his influence. His *Asia*, of which the eleventh volume, of considerably more than a thousand pretty closely-printed octavo pages, has just appeared, notwithstanding the value of its contents, the general justice of its views, and the careful *critique* which pervades it, is and must remain a work in which the author has only partially succeeded. It is, properly speaking, neither a compendious history of geographical discovery, nor a system of geography, but an attempt to combine the irreconcilable attributes and uses of both. It is a book that would seem to require almost a lifetime to read, to say nothing of writing it. It is indeed “*die Erd-kunde im Verhältniss zu der Natur*”—a picture of the world large as life. It is the collected “*studies*,” to borrow a phrase as from the *atelier* of the painter, for a great work, rather than the work itself artistically completed. The learned and able author will be cheated out of more than half his fame in consequence of this mistake. His book will continue to be a rich field whence inferior men may plunder, almost without risk of detection, the

fragments of learning in which they array themselves. It cannot *tell*, as the value of its contents ought to make it *tell*, on the mass even of reading and reflecting persons. It is by his occasional writings, and, still more, by his academical lectures, that Ritter has given to geography a new impulse, and a new form.

He has rightly seen that in order to know the world aright we must familiarize ourselves in the first place with its special features, and by combining them attain to a notion of the whole. He has therefore made topography the basis of his system, the portal through which he enters the domain of geography. His groundwork is a description of the forms of a particular district, and their combination and relations to each other. After passing in review a number of such districts, by a farther comparison of them with each other as larger units, he enables himself to generalize his views of the forms assumed by the globe's surface. And thus in succession he arrives at generalized views of the forms and relations of the great divisions of the world--of the world itself. A new and more correct technical language for geography has been one result of this process. Another has been a more distinct separation of the essentials, the main object of geographical inquiry, from subordinate details and auxiliary inquiries. Professor Ritter has thought it for the best to combine ethnological with geographical science. But though he pushes on his investigations in these two distinct branches of knowledge *pari passu* (making local distribution his clue in tracing the labyrinthine perplexities of an inquiry into the origin and relations of the human race), he nowhere confounds them. Ethnography is made to supply hints whence the structure of unexplored or partially explored regions may be inferred; geography is made available to notice the migrations of tribes and families, or to show the possibility of their connection, but there is no danger of mistaking the one science for the other. And throughout the writings of Professor Ritter the methods of geographical inquiry—the formulas by which the magnitude and relative positions of terrestrial objects are ascertained, which by some authors are so ostentatiously paraded and lengthily dwelt upon as to obscure the results for the attainment of which alone they are of any value to the geographer, are always kept in due subordination. In like manner he has avoided the error of enlarging his geography with population statistics, an error into which the combination of ethnography was most likely to have led him. Lastly, Professor Ritter has taught us to make a new use of antiquarian research for the purposes of geography; to avail ourselves of the light thrown by speculative men, philologists and others, of late years, on the modes of thought of ancient peoples—their ways of conceiving natural objects—in order to

understand aright the fragmentary geographical notices they have left us. All these merits, which are comparatively indistinctly recognized in the large work of Ritter, have pervaded and animated his lectures; his printed works have owed part of their influence to the existence of a class of geographers prepared by his oral tuition to understand their full scope and bearing. And the revolution he has effected in the form, arrangement, and terminology of geographical science is the proof of the value of his mode of teaching.

Both of the works which have suggested the preceding observations are works of merit; though neither of them, tried by the standard we have set up, will be found to give entire satisfaction. They have, however, one recommendation not unfrequent in the best works of the old geographical school to which they in a great measure belong—conciseness and condensation. This is a feature which the new school would do well to appropriate. The habit of oral communication by lectures has in its founder favoured that habit of diffuseness alluded to above in speaking of his great work upon Asia; and in this respect too many of his disciples have emulated and surpassed their master.

The little text-book of M. le Chaix does not call for lengthened remark. It evinces extensive, and in general exact, knowledge of geography in the author, and considerable literary talent in its composition; but it does not appear well adapted to convey to elementary pupils (for whose use it is destined), a just idea of the object of geography, or to prepare them for the independent prosecution of geographical studies. It is a *catalogue raisonné* of the larger and smaller regions and districts of the globe, not a view of the earth itself as a whole, and of the structure and combinations of its subordinate parts. It is calculated for little more than the cultivation of a word-memory. The pupil upon whose memory it has been thoroughly impressed may be a walking dictionary of geographical nomenclature, without having a true and distinct image in his mind of any one of the hills, rivers, plains, or regions, the names of which he can rehearse so glibly. This defect is attributable not so much to the author—evidently a man of natural ability and fair acquirements—as to the geographical school in which he has been trained.

M. Balbi's *Elements of Geography* are entitled to a longer notice, longer indeed than our limits will admit of. To this the merits of the work itself, and still more of the author, entitle it. A list of his published works appended to the manual now on our table, reminds us in good time that M. Balbi has for more than thirty-five years been an assiduous and indefatigable labourer in the fields of geography and statistics, and how much and how valuable matters he has contributed during that period to those

sciences. Without pretending to lay before the reader an exhaustive catalogue, we may be allowed to recapitulate the leading and characteristic works in the order of their appearance.

In 1808 M. Balbi published at Venice, "A Politico-Geographical view of the actual Condition of the World on a New Plan." In 1817 he published in the same city his "Compendium of Universal Geography, adapted to the latest political arrangements, and the most recent discoveries, with systematic tables of the principal languages, and dissertations on the population of the five parts of the world." In 1817 he also published a tabular view of the actual condition of the globe in one sheet. In 1818 he published, still at Venice, "Elements of Geography for the use of young people." The only publications of M. Balbi that appeared during the year 1819 were new editions of his *Compendium*, and the *Elements of Geography*.

During the years 1820-22 (inclusive), circumstances confined M. Balbi's general and particular labours in a great measure to Portugal. A tabular view of the political and statistical state of Europe was published by him at Lisbon in 1820. In 1822 he published "Politico-Statistical Varieties relating to the Portuguese monarchy," and "A Statistical Essay on the Kingdom of Portugal and Algarvé, compared with the other states of Europe; to which is added a view of the actual state of science, literature, and the fine arts among the Portuguese of both hemispheres." Both of these works were published at Paris.

An "Ethnographical Atlas of the World, or a classification of ancient and modern peoples, according to their languages" (a volume of plates in folio, and a volume of letter-press in octavo), was published by M. Balbi at Paris in 1826. His "Political Balance of Power," for the use of statesmen, young people, and men of the world, published (also at Paris) in 1828, was originally intended to form part of the preceding book, but appeared ultimately as a separate and independent work. In 1827 M. Balbi published a "Historical and Statistical Essay on the Kingdom of Persia;" in 1828 "The French Monarchy compared with the Principal States of the World;" in 1829 "The Russian Empire compared with the Principal States of the World;" and in 1831 an "Essay, Historical, Geographical, and Statistical, on the Kingdom of the Netherlands;" all more or less upon the same plan as his works on Portugal.

The year 1831 was an epoch in the literary labours of M. Balbi. At the death of Malte Brun, the "*Abrégé de Géographie Universelle*" in the course of preparation by that eminent geographer, was left unfinished. The completion of the work was intrusted to Messrs. Larénaudière, Huet, and Balbi. The two first were charged respectively with the divisions of "The History of Geo-

graphy and Ancient Geography," and "Descriptive Geography." "The General Principles of Geography" fell to the lot of our author. This commission was the virtual recognition of M. Balbi as the only competent successor to the illustrious dead in the department of systematic geography in the literary world of Paris.

M. Balbi has not rested on his laurels. To say nothing of numerous new editions of his earlier publications both in French and Italian, he has published, in 1837-42, his "Abridgment of Geography, compiled on a new plan, according to the latest treatises and most recent discoveries; to which is added an alphabetical index that may serve as a substitute for a geographical dictionary;" and in 1841-42 he published "Essays, Geographical, Statistical, and various," a collection of almost all his contributions to periodical publications since the year 1828. The "Elements of Geography" appeared in 1843; and the veteran has other works in preparation—"The Preponderating Powers of the Earth: a comparative statistical view of the five great European Powers, and the United States;" and "Italy within its natural Limits; as a description geographical and statistical of Italy and its geographical dependencies."

The titles of M. Balbi's works would of themselves be almost sufficient to indicate to a reader tolerably versant with modern geographical literature, the school to which he belongs. It is a school which regards geography as interesting only in so far as it is useful to the statesman, the warrior, or the merchant, and makes comparatively little account of it for itself. The earth is to the disciples of this school a mere theatre for politicians and soldiers, or for the enterprising speculator. The human interest preponderates in their estimation, and they are always tempted to substitute for the description of land or sea, tables of population, estimates of manufacturing and agricultural wealth, or classifications of men according to their creeds, and nations according to their forms of government. All these favourite topics are doubtless interesting, and a knowledge of them extremely useful, but geography they are not. And so completely is the geographical subordinated to them by writers of this school, that they scarcely attempt a connected view of the system of the earth's surface—the mutual relations of its heights and depressions—the analogy or diversity of the structure of its different regions—their respective characteristic features.

To this school M. Balbi belongs, though he does not carry its distinguishing peculiarities to excess. It will have been seen from the subjects on which he has published, that political and statistical details possess more interest for him than pure geography, that the latter requires the spice of the former to have a relish for him, and engage his continuous attention. Even in the preface to his

Elements of Geography this is apparent, from the emphasis with which he dwells upon population statistics. But still pure geography is not so undervalued by M. Balbi as it has been by some of his *collaborateurs*. He can appreciate the comprehensive views of a Humboldt, and present luminous views of the earth as a connected and continuous surface. He does not deem it sufficient to present a meagre catalogue of places with their respective bearings and distances. He conveys to his readers images of the structure and appearance of the country. The circumstance which renders it necessary to classify M. Balbi with the geographers of the old or statistico-political school, is the fidelity with which he has clung to their classification. What he has learned from the new has been cut up and distributed among the arbitrary categories of the old school; he has not sufficiently imbibed the spirit of the new for it to give form and coherence to his views—to teach him a new arrangement. He attempts to convey an abstract or general notion of the earth before he makes the reader acquainted with its component parts; and he then proceeds to describe minutely less the various regions of the earth than portions of the abstractions he has placed in its stead. There is consequently a deficiency in reality and unity about his descriptions: we have, it may be, all the parts, but still they do not make one whole.

Again, we would repeat, to prevent misapprehension, that our object in these remarks is simply to record our dissent from the school to which M. Balbi must be considered as on the whole adhering. Of the high talents and accomplishments of M. Balbi there can be no question, any more than of the important services he has rendered to general science. If we could grant that his was the true way to compose a system of geography—or an introduction to geography—we must at once admit that it was as nearly perfect as can well be conceived. M. Balbi's facts are elaborated with much research and critical judgment—they are important—there is nothing superfluous or trifling about them—and in arranging and expressing them the author shows himself to be a literary artist of the highest class. Elegant, instructive, and truthful, as compendiums of varied stores of knowledge, Balbi's "*Abrégé*," and "*Elémens*," are invaluable. They are indeed more valuable to the accomplished geographer or statist than the tyro; for they are repertoires of information of that kind which it is most difficult to retain in the memory with accuracy, and in which the slightest inaccuracy may vitiate a whole chain of investigation. The "*Abrégé*" ought to be constantly at the geographer's hand in the closet, and the "*Elémens*" ought to be his travelling companion.

In the brief notice of M. Balbi's works, already alluded to, as

appended to the “*Éléments*,” he adverts to the frequent plagiarisms of which he has been made the victim. This he does not without cause, for no author has been so shamelessly and so injudiciously plundered by the book-making hacks of the present day. They have taken estimates and calculations from his works which were accurate at the time they were made, or as accurate as the *data* at that time attainable admitted of; and they have given them as strictly correct at much later periods, when they had become inapplicable. They have stolen injudiciously, without knowing what was worth stealing. When reproached with their plagiarisms some of them have unabashedly replied that they were compilers, and that M. Balbi himself was no more. To this shameless plea M. Balbi returns an answer well worthy the attention of the manufacturers of cheap and popular books, and their indiscriminate patrons:—

“As for the argument that we ourselves, in what we present as original facts, have made use of data either already known, or for which we are indebted to the courtesy of our *collaborateurs*, we reply once for all:—The originality of a work consists not in the creation of all its elements, but in discovering them in obscure collections, unpublished manuscripts, or the conversation of distinguished men; in re-uniting them when they have been scattered in twenty or a hundred different works; in verifying them; in pruning them of all that is erroneous; in stating them, so as to render them available for the purposes of comparison, which they seldom are; in arranging them; in filling up *lacunæ*, or indicating where they exist; in a word, elevating the formerly dispersed and disregarded materials to the dignity of a science. This has been the aim of all our labours: and if it shall happen to us in our turn, that equivocal facts, or facts valueless for want of proper combination, are to be extracted from our writings to be refuted or turned to better account—honour to him who performs the task: it is not against him that our complaints will be directed.”
